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JACK OF ALL TRADES

a person who knows a little about a lot of different subjects or activities, but not a lot about any one of them

1. Walt is good at so many things: he can fix the plumbing and wiring in his house, he fixed his roof when it leaked, he installed his washer and dryer, and he paints the house when it needs it. He's really *a jack of all trades*.
2. The position in the company required someone who knew everything about a very narrow subject. They weren't looking for *a jack of all trades*.

The expression is part of the saying "He's *a jack of all trades* but a master of none." Being described as *a jack of all trades* can be either a compliment (usually when it is used without the second half of the saying) or an insult (when it occurs in the saying and the emphasis is on the fact that one is master of none).

JOHN HANCOCK

one's signature

1. If you'll just put your *John Hancock* on this line at the bottom of the contract, you can drive the car away right now.
2. They sent the check back because he forgot to put his *John Hancock* on it.

The expression refers to the signature of the first person to sign the American Declaration of Independence in 1776. *John Hancock's* signature was larger than the others and stood out clearly.

JOHNNY-COME-LATELY

a newcomer

1. You can't expect to join the company, take over immediately, and not cause some hard feelings. To the workers, you're *a Johnny-come-lately*.
2. The author of the book was under attack because he was *a Johnny-come-lately* to the field and didn't have the reputation that the older, more established authors had.

Compare to: *wet behind the ears*

The expression is used to dismiss someone's importance due to a lack of experience.

JUMP THE GUN

to do something prematurely; to start early, before all the preparations have been made.

1. You can't begin the project yet. You're going to have to wait until the plan is thoroughly developed. Don't *jump the gun*.
2. You bought your son a football and he's only six weeks old. Don't you think you're *jumping the gun* a little?

The expression probably originates from foot racing, in which an overly anxious runner would accidentally begin the race before the starting gun was fired.

JUMPING-OFF POINT

a starting place or inspiration

1. Kelly used her mother's lasagna recipe as a *jumping-off point*, but added her favorite ingredients to make it the way she liked it.
2. Joe used sheet music as a *jumping-off point* for his song. He played the tune as written, but added to it as he went.

This expression is usually used for discussions or creative pursuits.

JUNK FOOD

food that is relatively unhealthy, high in sugar and fat and lacking in vitamins, minerals and other body-building components

1. My children seem to live on *junk food*: hamburgers, French fries, milkshakes, chips, cakes, cookies, candy, and soda pop.
2. The parents brought snacks for the children to eat. The school had asked them to bring healthy foods like fresh fruit and vegetables, yogurt and cheese. They asked them not to bring *junk food*.